

2

November 2, 1964

Dr. Arnold Katz
Department of Economics
School of General Studies
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027

Dear Dr. Katz:

Our interest in educational retardation was to try to get some check figures on the incidence of mental retardation in the United States. There must be a variety of other statistics on this point through educational censuses, but since we had the 1/1000 sample at hand I thought we out to try to pull off what we could from that as well. My original intention was to extract a sub-file of those records which include a reference to a child whose educational attainment was, say, at least three years behind the norm for his age. We thought then to exclude those records where this deficiency was coincident with a low socio-economic status of the parents, and thereby get some estimate of the frequency of retardation in the middle and upper class segments which should have no serious economic limitations. It could then be of some interest to examine the characteristics of such a file for the correlation of educational lagging among other members of the same kindred, and for the demographic features of the household. What we have actually done has been to flag a summary tape at those records which show such a feature, but I do not believe we have actually extracted a sub-file, although this could probably be done fairly readily if this proves to be more economical than processing the entire, marked tape.

However, I have not been giving this particular item very high priority, although I do intend to go on with it at some point, because of the frequency of a serious data error which I can most economically reference by including carbon copies of some correspondence I had earlier this year. We also have the usual but very serious problem that the census is based on households rather than families, so that children who are away in special schools are likely not to be enumerated with the household.

Since I assume that you are primarily interested in the educational background of an adult in relation to his economic performance, probably very little that I have been saying will be relevant to your interests.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

*Encls: copies of ltr to Bercusford
dated 3/5/64 + 3/10/64*

4 KATZ